



October 31, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Governor of the State of Indiana
State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Daniels:

In accordance with IC 20-10.1-25.1, this letter provides you with an annual update of progress on the Buddy System Project administered by the Corporation for Educational Technology (CET).

The attached report portrays another exceptional year for the project now in our 19th year of existence. In 2000-01, the CET Board of Directors made sweeping changes to the project to focus more on facilitating student academic achievement and growing our professional development capacity. All of our new activities align with PL 221 and the *No Child Left Behind* legislation to better serve the needs of education in our state. To signal the differences between the old Buddy program and the new one, the Board renamed the project as Buddy², the Next Generation of Teaching & Learning.

As the nation's first and foremost endeavor to extend learning beyond the classroom, Buddy has provided learning opportunities to over 60,000 Hoosier youngsters in one or more of our initiatives and training to more than 14,000 educators from all 92 counties. We also maintain four websites available to Indiana youth and teachers, providing expertise, best practices and classroom ideas through Websites dedicated to instruction with technology, writing skills, and technology skills assessment.

Buddy² now operates several different projects and the attached report provides a brief synopsis of:

- Our award winning website which provides free technology-based teaching and learning resources
- Our five-year STAR Writers R&D project to improve writing instruction
- Our *Indiana Writing Summit* conference conducted in a partnership with the Purdue University School of Education
- Our new website, <http://thewritingsite.org>, which provides K-12 writing resources and an interactive tutorial for holistic assessment of student writing using ISTEP+ rubrics
- Our *Write Connections* quarterly newsletter publications on writing instruction, and
- Our BTLC training center established to effect share best practices in teaching and learning with technology.

We have several improvements currently underway for the coming year of the program and look forward to continued growth in project effectiveness. Though budget cuts have necessarily limited the scope of our R&D operations, we are excited by our results.

CET, by its charter, can also accept grants from public and private entities. Over the years we have received various grants to develop special projects of value to Indiana education. In 2000, the Lilly Endowment granted CET funding specifically to develop *MyTarget*, an assessment tool for teacher savvy in the use and integration of technology. The site has now been used by over 20,000 teachers across the state to assess their instructional technology skills and provide professional development opportunities aligned with their unique needs. Though the initial funding is long since exhausted, Buddy continues to maintain and promote effective use of the *MyTarget* tool to guide professional development for Indiana teachers.

Additionally, and on a personal note, I, as president of CET, have spent most of the past year chairing the efforts of the Indiana Education Technology Council in developing a new Digital-Age Learning Plan. Again, the Lilly Endowment has funded the costs of the plan other than my participation. The plan, developed by a council of 18 distinguished representatives from many walks of life and appointed by you and Dr. Reed, articulates a master plan for developing 21st Century skills for all of our K12 students using technology as a foundation for changes in our schools and classrooms. That plan now awaits your consideration.

We again thank you for the generous support your Office has always given the project and we look forward to serving the state with the exciting mission we have undertaken. If there are questions about the report or the project, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marvin E. Bailey, President

Cc: The Honorable Robert Garton
The Honorable Brian Bosma
Dr. Suellen Reed
CET Board of Directors

Buddy² Mission Statement

Buddy² develops and facilitates leading edge learning projects in K-12 school communities to increase student achievement using technology in anytime, anywhere settings. Buddy² initiatives aim to share best practices among educators, strengthen family involvement in education, and extend learning beyond the bounds of school time and place. Buddy² values and supports equal access to learning technologies regardless of socioeconomic realities.

The *Buddy System Project* began in 1988 by providing home technology to 250 families in five school communities through a partnership of public and private institutions. Since that time we have served over 60,000 students in one or more Buddy initiatives. Buddy has provided programming, special project facilitation and training services to more than 14,000 educators from all 92 Indiana counties through its grants, professional development center, outreach training programs and conferences. Our award-winning website provides free teaching and learning resources to over 1,000 visitors daily (teachers, parents, students) at <http://www.buddyproject.org>. Buddy programs, projects, services and publications each express one or more of our core values:

- Learning opportunities beyond classroom time and place;
- Technology as a tool to support learning goal achievement;
- Parent involvement in the education of their children;
- Equal access to technology resources for all students and teachers; and
- Reflective practice of teaching and learning for continuous improvement.

STAR Writers: From 2001 to 2004, we conducted the STAR Writers research and development project, working with 40 public school teachers of grades 3 through 8 in five schools, toward improved student writing performance. We learned that student achievement in writing is attained by increasing attention to instruction and practice of writing skills. Our concentrated efforts paid off with double-digit gains from pre- to post-test over the project period, but showed a need for increased confidence among teachers in holistic assessment of student writing. Toward that aim, we completed a two-year follow-up study, working with 35 teachers in four schools in June 2006. Confidence of participating teachers in grades 2 through 8 in holistic assessment using the ISTEP+ rubrics dramatically improved over the two-year program (85% confident or very confident compared to 10% at the beginning of the project) and inter-rater reliability between teachers and trained STAR scorers consistently exceeded 90% after significant embedded professional development. We hoped that student achievement gains would continue to show dramatic increases, but our final evaluation yielded mixed results across grade levels and among classrooms in the STAR Writer 2 project.

A review of all STAR data (surveys, test results, classroom observations and teacher reports) revealed a positive correlation of writing gains by students to the level of “buy-in” and commitment to project activities expressed by classroom teachers. Building teacher confidence and skills in the area of writing instruction and assessment are of paramount importance if we are to see writing gains for all Indiana students. Few Indiana teachers reported having received

training in writing instruction in their pre-service education (only one among the 60+ STAR teachers) and even fewer (0) felt confident in their ability to holistically assess writing.

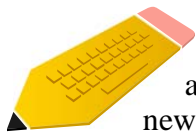
Indiana Writing Summit: One resulting action of our STAR R&D project was to join with Purdue University College of Education to better address teacher and student writing instruction needs across P-16 grade levels. Our first collaborative endeavor was to bring over 100 representatives from universities, K-12, writing projects, communities and government together to identify issues, share resources and discuss strategies needed to build and deliver quality writing instruction across all grades and disciplines. This *Indiana Writing Summit* was held on August 7, 2006 in Indianapolis. The proceedings from that event are posted at <http://thewritingsite.org/research/ws/> and will guide follow-up discussions and more collaborative initiatives during 2007.

The Writing Site: This major development initiative is a direct outgrowth of insights gained in the *STAR Writers'* projects. Buddy's vision for this **free** resource is to become "*the place to go*" for writing information in the K-12 environment for teachers, students and parents. First launched in mid-2005, *The Writing Site* features:

- An interactive tutorial for holistic assessment of student writing using the Indiana ISTEP+ writing rubrics.
- Hundreds of downloadable and printable student writing samples for use as exemplars in writing instruction
- Summaries of popular writing models and assessment strategies with links to their official sites
- Articles covering writing instruction and assessment issues across all content areas and grade levels.
- Technology tips and tools to enhance the writing experience for students and teachers



The visitor log at *The Writing Site* has grown from 3,100 visitors in September 2005 to 17,900 visitors during September 2006 — approaching 6 times more monthly traffic than just one year ago! Feedback from teachers, administrators, and writing consultants from Indiana and across the nation has been overwhelmingly positive. New material is continually added toward making this a world-class resource.



Write Connections: One year ago (November 2005) we launched the *Write Connections*, a companion quarterly publication to *The Writing Site*, which is available **free** as an emailed PDF attachment for subscribers. The four-page newsletter delivers original articles about writing instruction and assessment issues as well as some regular features and columns. It is published in three editions for teachers of primary, intermediate and secondary grade levels. As of October 2006, we have more than 500 subscribers to *Write Connections*. Subscribe at <http://thewritingsite.org>.

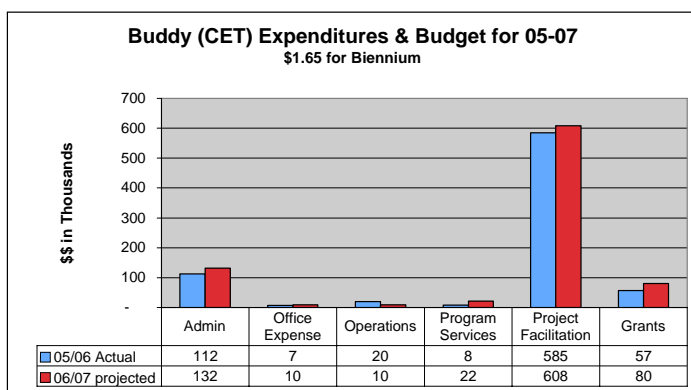


Buddy Teaching and Learning Center (BTLC): Buddy has maintained a training center since 1995, serving teachers from nearly every Indiana county. The current *Buddy Teaching and Learning Center* is located at 6321 La Pas Trail in Indianapolis. (<http://www.btlc.org>) The BTLC serves three important functions:

- Delivery of high quality, low-cost professional development for hundreds of teachers each year at the BTLC and hundreds more at local schools through the Outreach program. In the

first 4 months of 2006-2007 we have provided training for three times the number of teachers as for the same period last year.

- Host venue for other organizations' training programs (IN Dept. of Education, nonprofit agencies)
- An office/work center for Buddy facilitators to meet, develop and prepare support materials for *The Writing Site*, *Write Connections* and all BTLC offerings. More than a dozen part-time educator consultants regularly contribute their expertise to BTLC training program development and delivery.



Buddy Funding: The Corporation for Educational Technology budget, approved by the Indiana General Assembly, was reduced from our typical \$3 million biennial budget to \$1.65 million for each of the past two biennium periods. Buddy can do a lot with a little, however, and stretched the amount to serve all Indiana educators, students and families through development of high quality K-12 content delivered via the

worldwide web and through low-cost training programs. We will resume intensive R&D projects once our budget reverts to pre-economic crisis levels.

As always, we very much appreciate the continued support and partnership of the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Department of Education that, together, make our work feasible, productive, and cost-effective toward the ultimate benefit for all Indiana citizens.